

CHARLESTON GAZETTE (W)

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Dubious policy

IN March a car bomb was exploded in the Bir Abed neighborhood of southern Beirut, killing 80 people and wounding hundreds.

The morning following the blast workers still were pulling bodies from the rubble, says John Kifner of *The New York Times*. Suddenly a banner was unfurled across one of the ruined buildings which reported the bomb's parentage: "Made in U.S.A."

Subsequently, reports revealed that the American Central Intelligence Agency had been in some manner linked to the blast. The agency wasn't accused of executing the terror or of masterminding it but rather of instructing in terror tactics those perhaps responsible.

Sheik Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah of the Islamic group Party of God has a mosque and a

group of devoted disciples in the Bir Abed neighborhood. Some people suspect March's bombing was directed at him.

That raises the issue as to whether the hijacking of the TWA jet passenger plane from Cairo to Athens to Rome was in retaliation for the earlier act of terror. Hostages from this aircraft, reports Kifner, were taken to see the damage caused by that explosion.

Thus, terror feeds on terror and invites more terror.

Under this circumstance does it make sense for the United States to talk, as some have talked — notably Senate Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd — and some have intimated — notably President Ronald Reagan — of reprisal when the current horror ends?